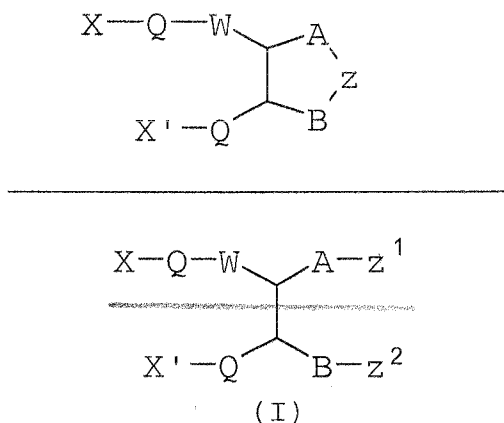


**IN THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, in this application.

Claims 1-14 (canceled)

15. (withdrawn-currently amended) A process for preparing a compound of the general formula I



in which one of X and X' represents a polymer, and the other represents a hydrogen atom;

each Q independently represents a linking group;

W represents an electron-withdrawing moiety or a moiety preparable by reduction of an electron-withdrawing moiety; or, if X' represents a polymer, X-Q-W-together may represent an electron withdrawing group; and in addition, if X represents a polymer, X' and electron withdrawing group W together with the interjacent atoms may form a ring;

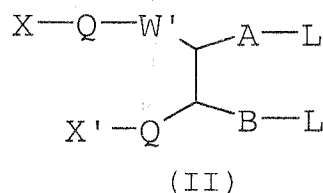
~~Z each of  $\text{Z}^1$  and  $\text{Z}^2$  independently represents a single protein group derived from a biological molecule, each of which is linked to A and B via two thiol groups generated by reduction of a disulfide bridge in the protein a nucleophilic moiety; or  $\text{Z}^1$  and  $\text{Z}^2$  together represent a single group derived from a biological molecule which is linked to A and B via two nucleophilic moieties;~~

A is a  $\text{C}_{1-5}$  alkylene or alkenylene chain; and

B is a bond or a  $\text{C}_{1-4}$  alkylene or alkenylene chain;

wherein the process comprises reducing a disulfide bridge in the protein and reacting the reduced protein with either

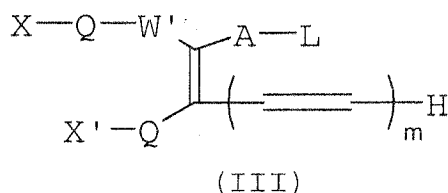
- (i) a compound of the general formula II



in which X, X', Q, A and B have the meanings given for the general formula I;

W' represents an electron-withdrawing group or, if X' represents a polymer, X-Q-W' together may represent an electron withdrawing group; and  
each L independently represents a leaving group; or

- (ii) a compound of the general formula III



in which X, X', Q, W', A and L have the meanings given for the general formula II, and

in addition if X represents a polymer, X' and electron-withdrawing group W' together with the interjacent atoms may form a ring, and m represents an integer 1 to 4; with

~~compounds of the general formula  $\text{Z}^1\text{Nu}$  or  $\text{Z}^2\text{Nu}$  in which each of  $\text{Z}^1$  and  $\text{Z}^2$  independently represents a group derived from a biological molecule, or a compound of the formula  $\text{Z}(\text{Nu})_2$  in which Z represents a biological molecule, and each Nu independently represents a nucleophilic group; and optionally converting a resulting compound of the formula I in which W is an electron-withdrawing group into a corresponding compound of the formula (I) by reduction of the group W'.~~

16. (withdrawn-currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 15, in which the ~~[[a]]~~ polymer X ~~or X'~~ is a homo- or copolymer selected from the group consisting of polyalkylene glycols, polyvinylpyrrolidones, polyacrylates, polymethacrylates,

polyoxazolines, polyvinylalcohols, polyacrylamides, polymethacrylamides, HPMA copolymers, polyesters, polyacetals, poly(ortho ester)s, polycarbonates, poly(imino carbonate)s, polyamides, copolymers of divinylether-maleic anhydride and [[or]] styrene-maleic anhydride, polysaccharides, and [[or]] polyglutamic acids, ~~any of said homo- or co-polymers optionally being derivatized or functionalized.~~

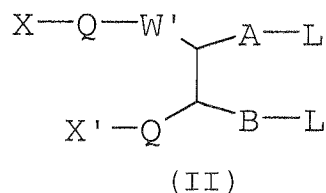
17. (withdrawn-currently amended) The process as claimed in claim [[16]] 15, in which the polymer is a polyethylene glycol.

18. (withdrawn) The process as claimed in claim 15, in which each linking group Q independently represents a direct bond, an alkylene group, or an optionally-substituted aryl or heteroaryl group, any of which may be terminated or interrupted by one or more oxygen atoms, sulphur atoms, -NR groups in which R represents an alkyl or aryl group, keto groups, -O-CO- groups and/or -CO-O- groups.

19. (withdrawn) The process as claimed in claim 15, in which W' represents a keto or aldehyde group CO, an ester group -O-CO- or a sulphone group -SO<sub>2</sub>-.

Claims 20-23 (canceled)

24. (withdrawn) The process as claimed in claim 15, in which the or each leaving group L represents -SR, -SO<sub>2</sub>R, -OSO<sub>2</sub>R, -N<sup>+</sup>R<sub>3</sub>, -N<sup>+</sup>HR<sub>2</sub>, -N<sup>+</sup>H<sub>2</sub>R, halogen, or -OØ, in which R represents an alkyl or aryl group and Ø represents a substituted aryl group containing at least one electron withdrawing substituent.



in which one of X and X' represents a polymer, and the other represents a hydrogen atom;

each Q independently represents a linking group;

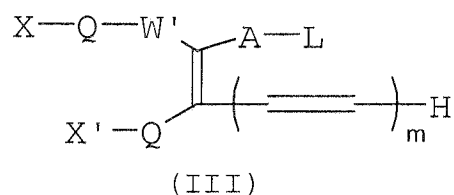
W' represents an electron-withdrawing group or, if X' represents a polymer, X-Q-W' together may represent an electron withdrawing group;

A is a C<sub>1-5</sub> alkylene or alkenylene chain; and

B is a bond or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkylene or alkenylene chain; and

each L independently represents a leaving group.

26. (withdrawn) A compound having the general formula III



in which one of X and X' represents a polymer, and the other represents a hydrogen atom;

each Q independently represents a linking group;

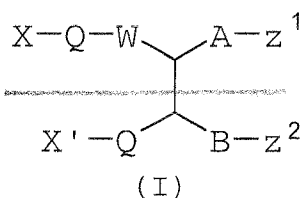
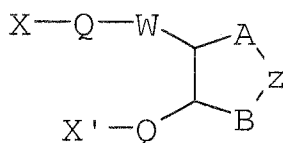
W' represents an electron-withdrawing group or, if X' represents a polymer, X-Q-W' together may represent an electron withdrawing group; and in addition if X represents a polymer, X' and electron-withdrawing group W' together with the interjacent atoms may form a ring;

A is a C<sub>1-5</sub> alkylene or alkenylene chain;

B is a bond or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkylene or alkenylene chain;

each L independently represents a leaving group; and m represents an integer 1 to 4.

27. (currently amended) A compound having the general formula I



in which one of X and X' represents a polymer homo- or copolymer selected from the group consisting of polyalkylene glycols, polyvinylpyrrolidones, polyacrylates, polymethacrylates, polyoxazolines, polyvinylalcohols, polyacrylamides, polymethacrylamides, HPMA copolymers, polyesters, polyacetals, poly(ortho ester)s, polycarbonates, poly(imino carbonate)s, copolymers of divinylether maleic anhydride or styrene maleic anhydride, polysaccharides, or polyglutamic acids, any of said homo- or co-polymers optionally being derivatized or functionalized; and the other represents a hydrogen atom;

each Q independently represents a linking group;

W represents an electron-withdrawing moiety or a moiety preparable by reduction of an electron-withdrawing moiety; or, if X' represents a polymer, X-Q-W- together may represent an electron withdrawing group; and in addition, if X represents a polymer, X' and electron withdrawing group W together with the interjacent atoms may form a ring;

Z each of Z<sup>1</sup> and Z<sup>2</sup> independently represents a single protein group derived from a biological molecule, each of which is linked to A and B via two thiol groups generated by reduction of a disulfide bridge in the protein a nucleophilic moiety; or Z<sup>1</sup> and Z<sup>2</sup>

~~together represent a single group derived from a biological molecule which is linked to A and B via two nucleophilic moieties;~~

A is a C<sub>1-5</sub> alkylene or alkenylene chain; and

B is a bond or a C<sub>1-4</sub> alkylene or alkenylene chain.

28. (currently amended) The compound as claimed in claim 27, in which the polymer X or X' is a polyethylene glycol.

29. (previously presented) The compound as claimed in claim 27, in which each linking group Q independently represents a direct bond, an alkylene group, or an optionally-substituted aryl or heteroaryl group, any of which may be terminated or interrupted by one or more oxygen atoms, sulphur atoms, -NR groups in which R represents an alkyl or aryl group, keto groups, -O-CO- groups and/or -CO-O- groups.

30. (previously presented) The compound as claimed in claim 27, in which W represents a keto or aldehyde group CO, an ester group -O-CO- or a sulphone group -SO<sub>2</sub>-, or a group obtained by reduction of such a group, or X-Q-W- together represent a cyano group.

31. (currently amended) The compound as claimed in claim 27, in which the polymer is a homo- or copolymer selected from the group consisting of polyalkylene glycols, polyvinylpyrrolidones, polyacrylates, polymethacrylates, polyoxazolines, polyvinylalcohols, polyacrylamides, polymethacrylamides, HPMA copolymers, polyesters, polyacetals, poly(ortho ester)s, polycarbonates, poly(imino carbonate)s, polyamides, copolymers of divinylether-maleic anhydride and styrene-maleic anhydride, polysaccharides, and polyglutamic acids Z<sup>1</sup> and Z<sup>2</sup> ~~together represent a single biological molecule.~~

Claims 32-34 (canceled)

35. (previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a physiologically tolerable compound as claimed in claim 27, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

36. (withdrawn) A method for treating a patient, the method comprising administering a pharmaceutically-effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 35 to the patient.

37. (new) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a physiologically tolerable compound as claimed in claim 28, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

38. (new-withdrawn) A method for treating a patient, the method comprising administering a pharmaceutically-effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 37 to the patient.

39. (new) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a physiologically tolerable compound as claimed in claim 31, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

40. (new-withdrawn) A method for treating a patient, the method comprising administering a pharmaceutically-effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 39 to the patient.